

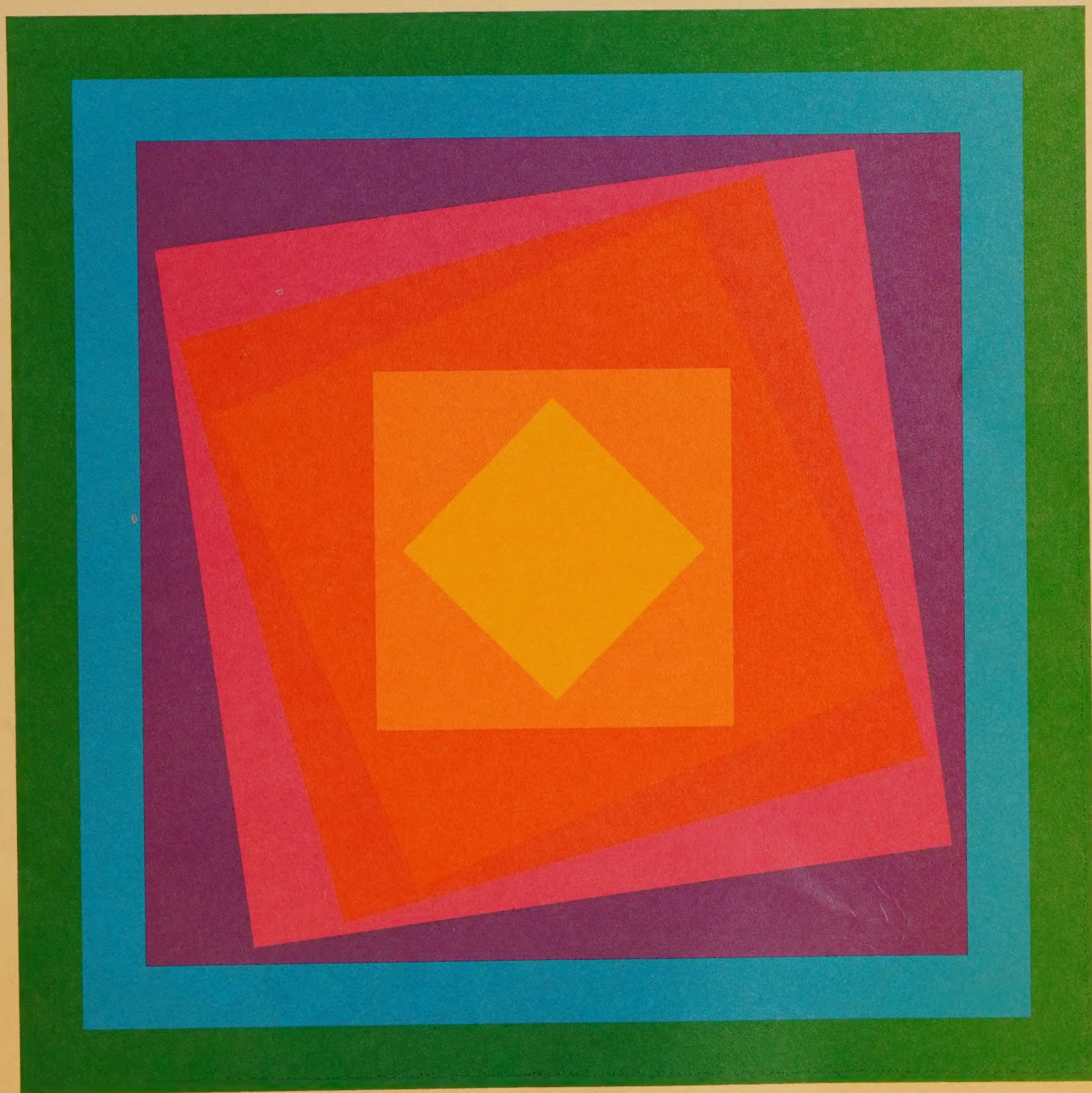
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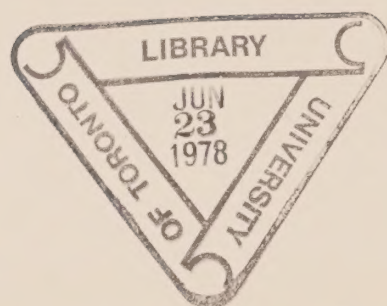
# PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN

STUDY GUIDE ON  
THE STATUS  
OF WOMEN

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Disponible en français

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## introduction

*"This world taught woman nothing skillful and then said her work was valueless. It permitted her no opinions and said she did not know how to think. It forbade her to speak in public and said the sex had no orators. It denied her the schools and said the sex had no genius. It robbed her of every vestige of responsibility, and then called her weak. It taught her that every pleasure must come as a favour from men, and when to gain it she decked herself in paint and fine feathers as she had been taught to do, it called her vain."*

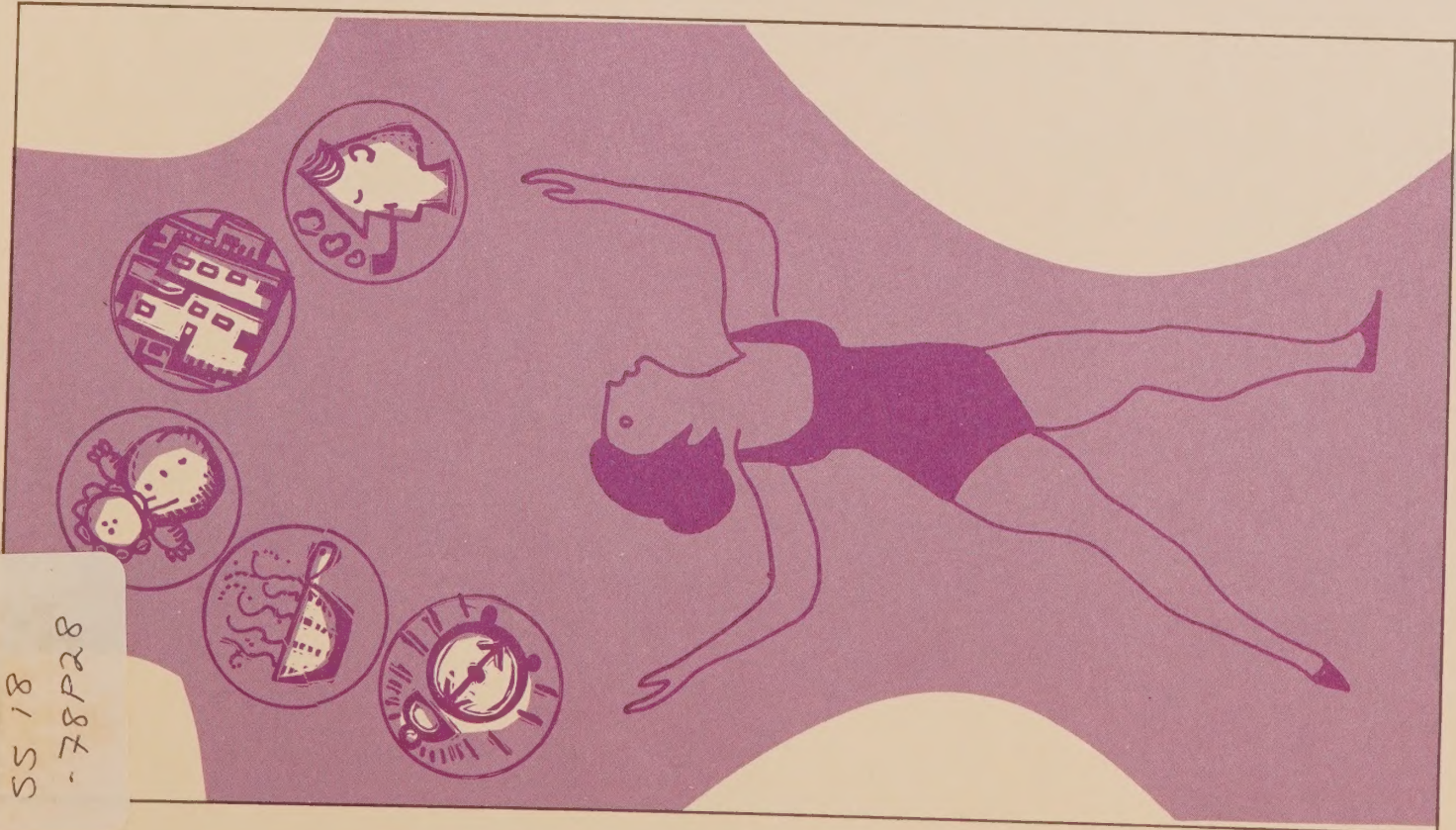
Carrie Chapman Catt

These words, written in 1902 by an American suffragist, sadly still apply to the situation of the Canadian woman. Having no history of achievements, it was assumed she would have no future of achievements. Although she now has access to the schools, she is taught as truth centuries-old misconceptions about women that have been institutionalized in literature and the social sciences. Freed by science from unwanted pregnancy, she is still defined in terms of her child bearing role. Her struggle now is not for the right to vote or for the freedom to work, but rather to put an end to the outmoded social structures and attitudes that keep women from involvement in the mainstream of society.

In some ways, the struggle of women today is more difficult than ever. Old attitudes die hard, and attitudes toward women are generations old. They are instilled in us when we are infants, reinforced by the educational system and complemented by a society structured around the nuclear family. To change our attitudes toward women ultimately means positive change in all aspects of our society. Yet change will come – and women are no longer content to sit quietly in the wings and wait for it to happen.

It is our hope that the study guide will encourage open discussions of the barriers that prevent women from participating as equals in society.

Women's Programme  
Department of the Secretary of State  
1978







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## using the guide

This study guide is intended as a catalyst for groups interested in looking at the status of women in Canada. Its aim is to provoke thought, discussion, argument and involvement in issues affecting women.

The guide is planned with young adults and adult groups in mind and is particularly suited for use in the classroom. The material as presented is introductory and meant for those beginning to learn about women's issues. Many of the suggestions in the guide can be modified for use with elementary school children. Supplementary learning materials have been included in Section X and are easily available from Canadian sources. Be flexible in using the guide in any way you find appropriate.

The guide is divided into sections, each of which covers a specific topic related to women's issues. Each section begins with a short text, which serves as an introduction to the topic at hand. Beside each text are quotes and comments related to the material which may complement, expand or contradict the text. Accompanying each section are suggestions for discussion and projects for groups and individuals. Some suggestions lend themselves more to group discussion, some more to individual reading and research. A list of suggested reading and films completes the guide.

When using this guide, it is important for the discussion leader to draw out from group members their real feelings about issues. Knowing the topic, members may express the "liberated" view they think is wanted, rather than their actual feelings. For this reason, role playing or fantasy situations are encouraged to permit freer expression of attitudes and prejudices.

There are no answers in this guide; the material is intended to raise questions in the reader's mind and suggest ways to probe for answers.









3

*"Even the social historians, who purport to deal with the lives of ordinary people, reject women's work as insignificant. Can you imagine the gall! This country would never have existed without all the unheralded accomplishments of women."*

*Corrective Collective, Never Done:  
Three Centuries of Women's Work  
in Canada*

If women's place in history had been written in invisible ink, it could not have vanished more completely than it has from modern history texts. There are volumes of men's contributions to their societies throughout the ages. What have women been doing for the last two thousand years?

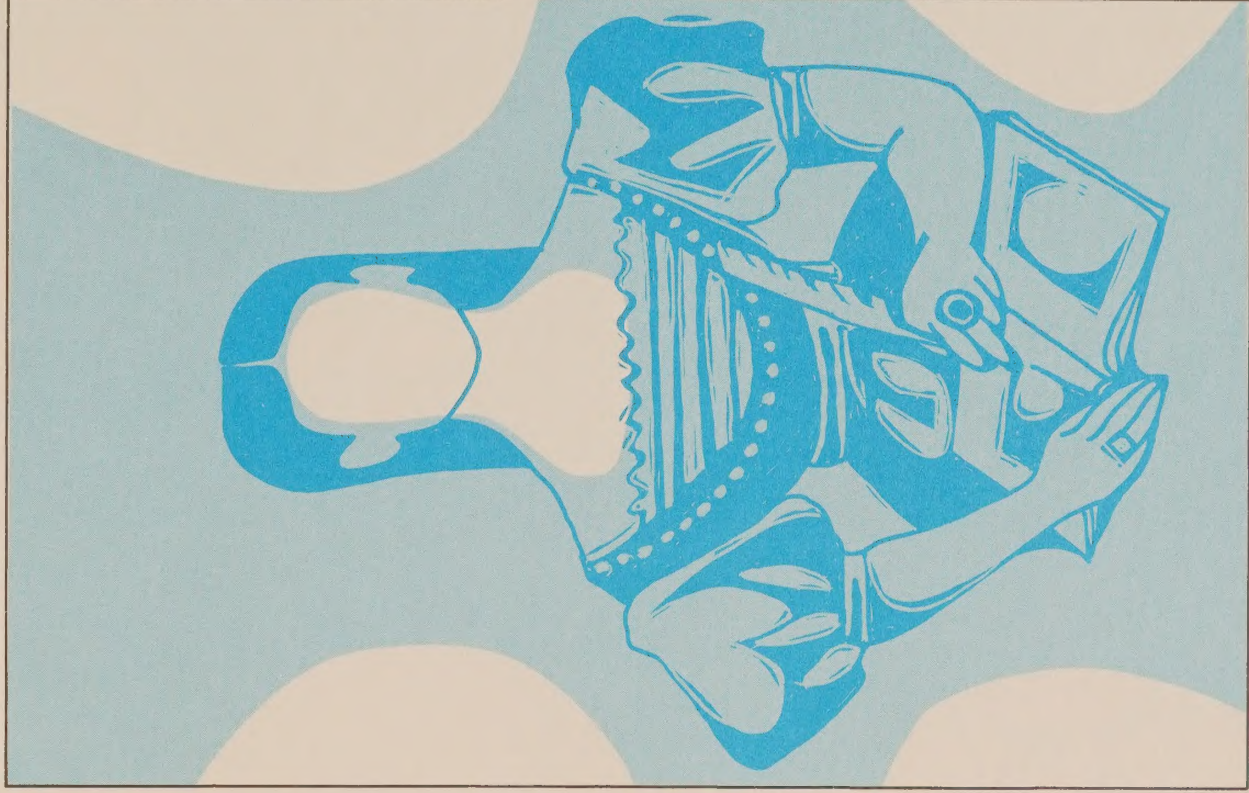
The role of women has been, in all societies, that of nurturing the family and raising the children. But this nurturing role often had a very different status than it does today.

Great Britain and European nations, before the industrial revolution, were predominantly agricultural societies. In most of these societies, the majority of the population worked the land, on family-owned farms or for landlords who hired families to work for them.

Thus the family was the basic unit of economic production. Fathers headed the family and were responsible for the labour of its members, both wife and children. Everyone had to work to ensure survival of the total unit.

In order to have someone to provide for them in old age, parents had to make sure that a number of children lived to adulthood. Many children died while young, which meant that people had large families as a type of insurance. Childbearing and child rearing in these societies were critical for the family economy, whereas today bearing children is an expensive activity with little material return. Hence, the role of childbearer was more highly valued in agricultural societies than it is in our own. The fact that the male head of the household could not have survived without the labour of his wife and daughters – in the fields, looking after the animals, weav-

## the invisible woman in history



ing, and sewing – meant that women's work for the family was considered more valuable than 'housework' is in modern societies.

*"There are only two general assertions that can be advanced about women in Canada in the first half of the 19th century.*

*... Firstly, the dominance of rural life meant that the value of woman as economic partner in the struggle for existence was a matter of general agreement. Secondly, ... everyday life in the colonies meant the strengthening of conventions of behaviour, and these conventions very often worked against women."*

*Naomi Griffiths,  
Penelope's Web:  
Some Perceptions of Women in  
European and Canadian Society*

Therefore, although there was a strict division of labour by sex and women were controlled by men (in some societies, e.g. Japan, they were considered the man's property and could be bought and sold), their contributions to their families' survival were esteemed essential. Their lack of independence did not prevent them from being economically productive until the beginning of the industrial revolution.

With the onset of the industrial revolution, factories and shops became increasingly important parts of the economy, and the family ceased to be the major economic unit. In societies where this was happening, restricting women to work for the family meant restricting their economic productivity.

There was a variety of responses to this situation. In England, the first country to industrialize, men who were financially able forbade their wives and daughters to work outside the home. To have a family with idle women was a symbol of prosperity, and since middle-class families usually had domestic servants, middle and upper class women became parasites on their men.



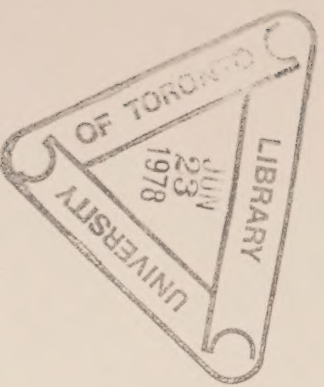


For poor women, the situation was the opposite. The transition from country to city was a difficult one, and many families in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries suffered terrible hardships. Both women and children took work in factories and mines under appalling conditions to earn only a subsistence wage.

Laws were passed, restricting the hours women could work, the types of work they could perform, and the conditions under which they could be employed. Although this legislation was intended to protect women, it had the opposite effect. As a result, men and women were employed in different jobs, and what the trade unions gained for their male members did not affect women workers. Instead, females were ghettoized in the worst paid, least secure segments of the economy.

*"Whereas the women of upper and middle classes claimed political freedom, the right to work, and improved educational facilities, working women wanted protection; while middle class women were fighting for equality, working class women demanded differential treatment."*

Victoria Klein,  
*Women: A Feminist Perspective*



Thus while middle class and working class women were affected differently by the modernization of society, both faced problems that stemmed from the belief that women should be restricted to the home, under the control of men. The nineteenth century saw vigorous activity by feminists, many of whose activities were designed to obtain for women a status as independent individuals. These women fought for the right to vote, to have an education, to be employed in work that was then closed to them, and to own their own property. (Until the Married Women's Property Acts were passed in 1870 and 1882, a married woman's inherited property, or wages from gainful employment, were by law the property of her husband.)

As women fought to regain the opportunity to be economically productive, which had been lost in the transition from country to city, they gained an independence they never had before.

As an academic discipline, history has been concerned with the passions and activities of the political elite. Women have not been part of this elite. The history of women's activities does not entail a chronicle of outstanding events like wars, elections, and laws but a story of the changing way of life through many generations. Among historians, there is an increased realization that the untold history of the masses of the general population, including women, is at least as important and interesting as the history of the acts and thoughts of kings and prime ministers.

## SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS: THE INVISIBLE WOMAN IN HISTORY

1. Prepare a wall chart from 1867 on showing major events in Canadian history. Fill in events of women's 'herstory' such as women getting the vote in Ontario or the first woman elected to Parliament. Illustrate your chart with drawings and photos showing life situations of the average woman of that time. Compare your chart with those in Canadian history texts.

2. "Long before Europeans arrived in North America, Native women were working to create and maintain Indian and Eskimo societies." Never Done, Corrective Collective.

Discuss the life of a Native woman before the arrival of the Europeans. How did her role compare with the role of early European female settlers?

3. "Canadians . . . emphasized the influence that women would provide in political life, the question of a new order of morality based upon the addition of the feminine viewpoint to the rough-and-tumble world of public questions." Naomi Griffiths, *Penelope's Web*

Discuss the contribution of early suffragists and female political activists. To what extent was their work influenced by the temperance movement? Did their "feminine viewpoint" bring about a "new order of morality"?

4. During the Second World War factories and family farms were almost exclusively run by Canadian women. Discuss the effects of this war effort on women's role in society. Research and discuss the changes that came with the end of the war. Did these changes improve or hinder women's struggle for equality?



Who's that leaping over buildings and breaking down doors barehanded? Batman? Superman? No, it's the Bionic Woman using her atomic strength to become television's newest super hero. Does the Bionic Woman really mean the end of the weaker sex? Holy equality, Batperson! Can this be true?

*"Absolute imperatives of sex differences can be reduced to four: women menstruate, gestate, and lactate. Men impregnate. Other differences are optional."*

John Money,  
*Behaviour Today*

In every standard health textbook, you will probably see outline drawings of man and woman. Man is pictured as taller, wider and heavier than his slender female counterpart. In the real world, you won't find many people who look like their textbook image. Some men are shorter than some women, and some women are huskier than some men. Yet the textbook images persist in people's heads and with them persists the idea of woman as not only a smaller, but a weaker version of man.

Physical differences between girls and boys at birth are minimal. Until about seven years of age, their physiological development is almost identical. Then the girl begins to produce more estrogen until, at about 13, the onset of menstruation indicates her ability to conceive.

As adults, there are more physiological differences. Women have less muscle tissue, particularly in the upper body. Women have about ten percent more body fat. Because of a different pelvic structure, women have more lateral flexibility and a lower centre of gravity than men. This gives females better balance, but may hinder their running speed.

These real physiological differences may influence the performances of men and women who are being tested to the limits of their physical abilities in Olympic games or space flights, but they have little to do with the routine demands of work or recreation.

## from the weaker sex to ... the bionic woman



Yet these differences are interpreted and reinforced by society to suggest that women be restricted from or censured for participation in physical activities that don't fit the image of women as weak and frail. Strength and fitness are sometimes seen as unfeminine. Physical exertion isn't ladylike. Even among Olympic athletes, the myth of the woman as a Barbie-doll creature persists: one female swimmer interviewed by the press during the 1976 Olympic games after losing to her muscular competitor in a tight race commented on the woman's "lack of femininity".

*"If a woman is really grunting and groaning and sweating, how can she be feminine?"*

John Pennel,  
*quoted in Sport and American Society, ed. by D. Sage*

Women are particularly censured for taking part in body contact sports or sports requiring a great deal of strength to move heavy objects. Consider the skepticism that greets women's football or hockey teams and women who take up weightlifting. In the Olympics of today, women are still not permitted to compete in contact sports such as hockey, or in weightlifting or hammer throw.

*"I worry about a girl becoming a great athlete, especially a runner. She might run so fast she'd never get caught by a boy."*

Dr. L.H. Smith in *Sport and American Society*

In part these restrictions spring from a desire to 'protect' women and their childbearing function. Women have been warned about the physical dangers of sport, but there is no evidence to suggest that sports are any more harmful to a woman's ability to bear children than to a man's ability to impregnate.





Nor is there any reason to believe that menstruating women should be restricted in their activities or perform poorly. Pregnant women near term are generally more cautious of physical exertion but there is little research to suggest that restrictions on their activities, if any, are necessary.

With the increasing realization among Canadians of the importance of keeping physically fit, more women are becoming active. But while the Bionic Woman is out breaking down doors, the Canadian woman is still trying to break down stereotypes about the weaker sex.

## SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS: FROM THE WEAKER SEX TO THE BIONIC WOMAN

1. Using your school or community as a model, discuss recreation and sports opportunities for women. Are women discouraged or forbidden from playing certain sports? Does the "Y" or community centre offer equal facilities for both sexes?
2. You are a judge asked to decide between two disputing parties: an airline company and a flight attendants' union. The union is insisting on the women's right to work after the thirteenth week of pregnancy. The airline has refused "for safety reasons". What are the arguments for each side and how would you decide the case?
3. Some women are afraid that arduous sport will make them lose their femininity. What does it mean to be "feminine" and how do you gain or lose this quality? How does this compare with the concept of "masculinity"? Can women compete with men and win or does this threaten your ideas of "femininity" or "masculinity"?
4. You are a filmmaker who has been asked to prepare a film promoting physical fitness for girls and women. What do you stress as the reasons for fitness? How do you encourage participation? What kind of women would you portray? Compare your proposed film with the film *Your Move*, produced by Health and Welfare Canada.
5. Discuss the contributions of women to the Olympic Games. How have Canadian women contributed? What restrictions do women athletes face? Do women really want to compete and win? Should women organize their own Olympic Games?





Sleep, baby, sleep

Your father tends the sheep

Your mother makes some soup to eat

For her little baby sweet

Sleep, baby, sleep

*Children's lullaby, Anonymous*

Even as tiny infants being sung to sleep by our parents, we are beginning to learn the roles we are expected to play when we are grown men and women.

As children mature, they learn to distinguish between male and female, to choose the appropriate sex role and to act as society expects their sex to behave.

*"A four-year old girl insisted that girls could become nurses but only boys could become doctors. She held to this belief tenaciously even though her own mother was a doctor. Hers was a belief clearly not based upon imitation of the most available model. It represented an induction from instances seen and heard in fiction as well as in fact."*

*Eleanor Maccoby & Carol Jacklin  
The Psychology of Sex Differences*

Citing contemporary research into the socialization of children, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, in its Report, noted the early influences on children's perceptions of sex differences. By the age of three, children begin to make clear distinctions between male and female. By six, they understand which sex they are to emulate and the behaviour expected of that sex. By adolescence, the different expectations of society for boys and girls are beginning to show up in academic achievement and career expectations.

Children learn sex roles partly by observing their mothers and fathers and partly by being told by adults what is masculine and what is feminine. Research indicates that children also take their norms of masculinity and femininity from the social environment, from what they see on television, read in books and observe in adults other

## growing up equal?



than their parents. Most of the images of men and women that children see on television are distortions of reality. Men are astronauts, detectives or superheroes. Women are mindless bits of set-decoration.

Studies of elementary and high school math and science texts either have no women in them at all or present women in demeaning or secondary roles.

*Feminists on Children's Media  
Dick and Jane as Victims:  
Sex Stereotyping in Children's Readers*

*"Daddy gave Mommy money to buy groceries. Mommy gave Daddy a kiss as he hurried off to work. Daddy bought a new dress for Mommy. She earned it by taking such good care of the house."*

*Richard Scarry  
What Do People Do All Day*

Nor are children's books any better. Stories featuring adventurous girls or achieving women are rare. Boys are active and adventurous while girls are passive and timid. Fathers in storybooks are usually portrayed at work and mothers at home. Women wear aprons and dresses and cook meals. Men wear suits and ties and work in offices. Books and television do not encourage young women to aspire to become independent and successful. Rather their success comes in how well they please men and boys.

*"I want to do something splendid," said Jo, "something heroic and wonderful, that won't be forgotten after I'm dead."*

*Louisa May Alcott  
Little Women*

*"As much as women want to be good scientists and engineers, they want first and foremost to be womanly companions of men and to be mothers."*

*Bruno Bettelheim in  
Lenore Whitzman,  
Sex Role Socialization*

As noted in the Royal Commission Report and many subsequent studies, once into the formal education system girls continue to encounter unequal treatment. Text books throughout the school system reinforce the differences between "men's" and "women's" roles. Course





streaming in high school programmes traditionally sends the girls into domestic science and the boys into shop. Guidance counsellors may encourage female students to gear their expectations toward traditionally “female” pursuits when choosing prerequisites for university entrance or planning careers. And the social values generally prevalent in the high school community encourage the notion that academic achievement may affect a girl’s “femininity”.

*“The idea of an educated woman is not yet taken seriously. . . She is not chased off the campus, she is even welcomed there – but she is not taken seriously as a student, and she will not be welcomed if she hopes to return as a serious lifelong scholar.”*

Cynthia Ozick  
*Women in Sexist Society*

If a young woman survives scholastically until university, she may well find herself lacking adequate preparation from high school in addition to having to deal with more subtle forms of discrimination. Many courses of study have traditionally imposed hidden quotas on the number of women accepted. Women are not taken seriously as scholars, particularly in the traditional masculine disciplines. And the idea of women being at university to “catch a man” persists in spite of scores of dedicated female scholars.

With this upbringing it is not difficult to understand why so many young women do not choose careers or, if they do, they choose careers that don’t measure up to their full capabilities. Having been encouraged to think they are second rate, women make career choices that give them second-class status.

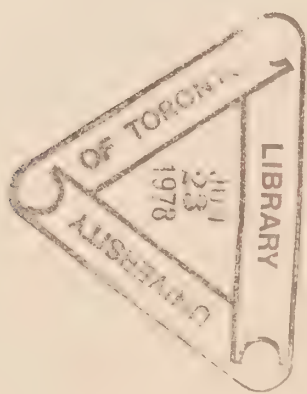
SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS:  
GROWING UP EQUAL?

1. You have just become the proud parent of twins – a boy and a girl. Discuss the differences in their upbringing. Draw a life plan for each child. In a mixed group, males can do a life plan for the boy and females for the girl. Compare and discuss.

2. Using women’s magazines, construct a picture of today’s woman based on the representation of women in the articles. Construct another woman based on the representation of women in the ads. How and why do they differ? Do the same using men’s magazines. What are the differences between the people you have constructed and the real people you know?

3. In a report in the New York Times, Jane Bergman observed that the female puppets appearing on Sesame Street are “a strident overbearing mother, a simpering querulous little girl with a squeaky voice, a trembly hysterical game show contestant, and a pony-tailed cheerleader.” What do these stereotypes teach young children about women? Is this representative of television programming for kids? How could it be changed?

4. Research indicates that girls have greater verbal ability and boys excel in spatial ability. Reference: Eleanor Maccoby, et al. The Development of Sex Differences. How do you account for these differences? If these conclusions are accurate, consider changes in the school system to accommodate these differences? Would the changes you propose equalize opportunities for men and women?





People probably began living in family units 200,000 to 500,000 years ago. Banding together in kin-based groups, early primates took the first step toward civilization. The family offered a secure haven in a hostile world. It divided the work, allowed time for nurturing children, and forged enduring bonds between men and women. From these early beginnings, the family has been a constant social unit in most societies.

*"Women cleared the land, worked as loggers, owned and operated mines, hunted for meat, and trapped for fur. They did this while raising families" ....*

*Corrective Collective,  
Never Done*

In our great grandparents' time, the household was larger, extended over two or three generations, and largely self-sufficient. Work was divided according to the needs of the family and women, though they carried different responsibilities, were respected and valued for their work. Child care was shared by various female family members and was secondary to other family tasks. Children were expected to contribute their share of the work.

In contrast, the modern family unit is small, isolated and transient. No longer sustained by an extended family of aunts, cousins and grandparents, the family consists of parents and children, or in many cases, of single parent and children. Today's family moves frequently and has fewer roots in the community.

*"Women today are considered to have two choices — to work or to stay at home. This implies that staying at home does not involve work. Yet at a time when the individualized world is moving toward a 40-hour week, women, many of whom may work at least 80 hours per week, are encouraged to regard this as not being at work."*

*Hannah Gaaron  
The Captive Wife*

## What's for dinner ?

### the role of the woman in the family

*"Housework is awful work. It's lonely and boring. There's nothing to show for it — it's all got to be done the next day. You don't get paid for it either."*

*Anne Oakley,  
Sociology of Housework*

Generally women in the nuclear family consider child care and housekeeping primary responsibilities. They often have interrupted or abandoned careers or education to marry and raise a family.

Archaic marital property laws represent society's attitude to women who are "just housewives". With no outside source of income, they are economically dependent on their husbands, particularly in the event of marriage breakdown.

Isolated from intellectual stimulation and worn down by the demands of a long and fragmented day of housework and child care, many women look to the work force as an alternative.

*"There isn't a minute when I'm not doing something. I make grocery lists on the bus and fold laundry while I watch TV. I never have time just for myself."*

*Working mother of two,  
interview in Ottawa, 1976.*





But working mothers who try paid work often find they have two jobs instead of one. As many men resent picking up household duties, these tasks are waiting when working mothers come home. Lack of childcare facilities can mean a long series of inadequate housekeepers or endless waiting lists at daycare centres. Even the most organized of working mothers can be defeated by the problem of a child too sick to attend school. Flexible hour jobs or part time jobs are almost impossible to find. Though the rewards of work may be satisfying, many women are finding this society is structured for the non-working parent or the non-parent worker.

During the last few years, we have begun to witness some change in the nature of the family unit. In new cooperative families, both parents share equitably in household tasks and child rearing. Fathers are assuming equal responsibility for nurturing children and doing housework. Mothers are taking responsibility for financial support.

*"The self-contained nuclear family just can't satisfy all the needs of its members. The wife is disappointed that her husband can't fulfill all her needs — he feels more pressured and resentful — they use each other as scapegoats and produce a great many neurotic kids as a result."*

*Prof. Esther Greenglass,  
Homemakers' Digest, May/June 72*

As the family changes, new social services provided by the community are very gradually taking shape. Daycare, after-four programmes and more flexible working hours are helping parents meet both their personal needs and the needs of their children.

Some families are replacing kin-based extended families with "intentional communities" of people who share not only financial responsibilities and household tasks but also similar ideals and aspirations. Still other couples are choosing not to marry or to marry and not have children.

These shifts in the traditional patterns of family life are not yet widespread or generally accepted. However, it is evident that if the trend to alter the nuclear family unit persists, it will result in fundamental change for the total society, both men and women.

## SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FAMILY

1. Look at your immediate family and your grandparents' families. What are the roles played by men and women? How do the women spend the majority of their time — at work outside the home, child care, education, housework? How do the men spend their time? Does this differ among couples who have chosen not to have children?

2. A new planet similar to earth has been discovered and a utopian society is to be created to populate it. Plan a society that has as its premise complete equality for men and women. Consider education, work, child rearing, social customs, and economic productivity. In mixed groups, divide the group into male and female, each sex to prepare a plan for the new society. How do the plans differ? Are the differences indicative of different expectations and concerns of men and women?

3. Break down the job of housewife into the various tasks performed, e.g. cook, teacher, laundry worker, etc. Consider the value of these tasks individually taking into account their social status, value to the community, economic value, hours of work and intellectual demands. Discuss whether or not you think housewives are recognized as having these skills according to the same scale of values.

4. There are over half a million children under six in Canada whose mothers work. This large group will grow up without the traditional "mother-in-the-home". Discuss the community services necessary to assist this group, including daycare, after-four and visiting homemakers. Can the society afford to support services that allow women to work? Are these services seen as priorities in your community?

5. Marital properties are currently unfairly divided in the event of marriage breakdown. Pension laws discriminate against all women, particularly housewives. What legal changes are necessary to protect the married woman who chooses to stay home? Can society afford to have women in the home during their most productive years?





Until the turn of the century, few women chose to work in paid employment. But unlike their grandmothers, almost all women today will take paid work at some time in their lives.

For many women, paid work is a necessity. Single women must work to support themselves. A growing number of families have a single parent, a female head of the family who is the only breadwinner. These women, found in all kinds of employment, work out of financial need. They do not have the opportunity of choice. Other married women work to supplement their family wage.

In addition to women who must work to survive, many other women are choosing paid employment. They are working seriously at life-long careers. Although their work may be briefly interrupted by child rearing, these women are returning and staying in the labour force for their entire working lives. Other women, their child rearing tasks over, are re-entering the job market after education or re-training.

*"The possibilities for equality at work exist. What blights them is the fact that every woman who goes to work brings to her desk, from a man's point of view, all the unrelated, accumulated problems, desires, and feelings he has about women in general."*

Michael Korda  
Male Chauvinism

According to Women in the Labour Force: Facts and Figures (1975), from 1964 – 74 the number of Canadian women working increased 68 percent. Women now make up over 40 percent of the labour force and more than half are married.\*

This change in the labour force is happening in spite of prejudicial treatment of working women. It is in employment that women are most blatantly discriminated against and penalized for their gender.

\* All subsequent statistics referred to in this chapter are taken from Women in the Labour Force (1975), Women's Bureau, Labour Canada.

## From sun to sun

### women & paid work



*"It is apparent that equal pay for equal work will not be a fact in Canada until all employees and unions accept the principle. Nor will it be a fact, human nature being what it is, until there is effective legislation to enforce the principle."*

The Report of the Royal Commission  
on the Status of Women, 1970

The occupations open to women are still severely limited by social custom and patterns of university admission. For example, based on 1971 Census data, 93.7 percent of graduate nurses were female but only 7.7 percent of physicians were women. An estimated 88.2 percent of tellers and cashiers were women, but only six percent of those

who found their way to financial management positions were female. Not surprisingly, 97 percent of secretaries were female, but only 2.5 percent of those in general managerial jobs were women.

Nor can women who do make it into professional or managerial positions expect the same salaries as men, as shown in the following examples based on 1971 Census data. Between men and women doctors with their first professional degree, there was a gap of from \$6,000 to \$17,000 in salary. Even in the "female" field of nursing, women's salaries were as much as \$3,800 less than the men's for equivalent education levels.

*"We found strong support for the claim that some employers go out of their way to find, or make, a difference in the duties of women and men so that different rates can be paid within the letter of the law."*

The Report of the Royal Commission  
on the Status of Women, 1970

Equal pay for equal work is still far from a reality for Canadian women. Although many provinces have provided some protection, there are still many legal loopholes. Most legislation allows males to be paid more if they have even one more task than do female workers. These tasks may be as simple as male janitors carrying their mops further than the females. The absence of an "equal pay for work of equal value" clause leaves most labour legislation ineffective.

The disparity between wages of men and women is large. The following statistics from 1973 show the differences. Full time female workers earned an average of \$5,166, while full time males earned \$9,455 per year. The hourly rate for a woman working as a fish cleaner was \$1.64. A man doing the same work made \$2.13 per hour. A senior female bookkeeper earned a weekly wage of \$148, while her male counterpart earned \$182.





*"Although many unions have large female memberships, few women get to positions of leadership. Thus a predominantly male executive which is either indifferent or hostile to working mothers is quick to drop day care provisions in favour of what it feels are more important 'bread and butter' issues."*

*Grace Hartman  
Canadian Union of Public Employees Journal, 1972*

Nor have labour unions been of much help to female workers. Although many unions are now recognizing the need for equal wages for women workers, few contracts are negotiated that contain such a clause. Women do not often sit in the executive of the union. Those provisions that most benefit women such as day care, flexible hours, or equal pay are often put at the bottom of the list of priorities by all-male negotiating teams.

*"The view of women held by the majority of CBC males – summed up as 'women's place is in the home' – can be broken down into four main generalizations:*

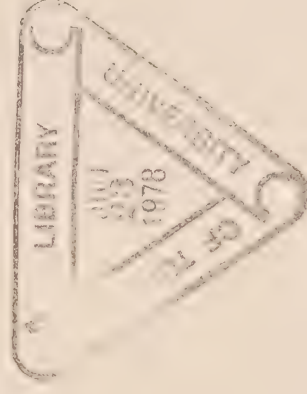
1. *Women are not career-oriented. They do not expect to get ahead, and would not really want to. They are not willing to move to another city to improve their positions. Most of them do not really need the money – or not much.*
2. *They are less suited than men for many kinds of jobs. They do not have the education and experience for specialized or 'important' work. They quit too often. They cannot do strenuous physical work.*
3. *They are better suited than men for other kinds of work. They have better manual dexterity. They are quick and accurate, and they do not mind repetitive detail as much as men do.*
4. *They are overly emotional and generally troublesome.*

*Women in the CBC: A summary of the report of the Task Force on the Status of Women in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1975*

Women are miscast by employers as unreliable, emotional, and temporary employees. They are accused of having high rates of absenteeism. In fact, in 1974 the rate for women (1.86 percent) was slightly less than that for men (1.98 percent). Employers who have established on-site child care facilities have found that female absenteeism and employee turnover decreased dramatically when the day care was opened.

Women workers exhibit all the good and bad characteristics of male workers. As workers, they are no more or less dependable than men. They maintain this work record in spite of the child care and household responsibilities that many women carry.

Women are no longer just 'until' workers putting in time until they marry, until they have children, or until their husband retires. They are working out of financial need and a personal commitment to a more fulfilling way of life.



## SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS: WOMEN AND PAID WORK

1. Resolved: that labour laws differentiating between men and women are unfair. Debate this resolution from the point of view of middle class and working women in the 1800s. Redebate the resolution from the point of view of today's working woman.
2. A Canadian union whose membership is 50 percent women is negotiating a new contract. One third of the group plays the part of management, one third plays the union negotiating team, and one third represents the interests of the women workers. Keep in mind that women are not often represented on negotiating teams. How important are women's issues to the team and management? Does your contract help all or some women? Compare it to contracts negotiated by similar unions in Canada.
3. Research and discuss the labour laws in your province as they apply to women. How might the legislation be improved to protect the woman worker?
4. Using statistics available from the federal or provincial government departments of labour, prepare a profile of the average Canadian female worker. Include age, marital status, education, probable occupation, salary, rate of absenteeism, etc. Do the same for the male worker and compare.
5. Look back at the quotation from *Women in the CBC*. Are these attitudes found in your office, factory or school? Do these statements really represent the women who work or study with you? Draw up a list of four points that best describe the working women you know.



Every society has certain sets of beliefs that are widely held, freely expressed and govern the behaviour of its people. These beliefs may benefit all the people – such as belief in the democratic process – or may penalize certain members of the society – as racism or religious discrimination does.

*"The little jokes about women that pass for a friendly, cozy manifestation of masculine humour...are not only wounding and contemptuous, but link us to more overt and harmful acts of prejudice, fear and hatred."*

Michael Korda  
Male Chauvinism

In Canada, we tend to frown on beliefs that malign ethnic, racial or religious groups. Human rights legislation provides a framework to protect these minorities against the public expression and practice of discriminatory beliefs. Yet beliefs and attitudes that demean and stereotype women are freely expressed and openly practised across the country.

Sexism – discrimination against an individual or group based on gender – is a rather unique form of discrimination. It is almost never aimed at men. Its target group is the 52 percent of the population who are women. It is tolerated in almost every part of the society and is often practised by the same women who are its victims.

*"Women in the CBC are outnumbered three to one by men...this male majority holds a distinctly different view of women's role at work and in society than that held by the women themselves."*

Women in the CBC: A Summary of the Report of the Task Force on the Status of Women in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1975

In everyday conversation and in most social situations, attitudes that portray women as second-class citizens are expressed without fear of public censure and practised without a second thought.

## i'm all for women's lib, but...



*"Any man that understands (sic) horses, has a pretty considerable fair knowledge of women, for they are just alike in temper and require the same identical treatment. Encourage (sic) the timid ones, be gentle and steady with the fractious, lather the sulky ones like blazes."*

T.C. Haliburton  
Sam Slick

*"In point of morals, the average woman is, even for business, too crooked."*

Stephen Leacock  
The Woman Question

Consider the figures of speech commonly employed to characterize women in various situations. Women are shown as vain, foolish, scheming, passive, hysterical, fearful, weak and submissive. Skilled females who are ambitious or assertive are portrayed as sexually hostile or threatening. Successful women are pictured as manipulative or incapable of personal relationships.

*Two old maids sitting in the sand,  
Each one wishing the other was a man.*

Nursery Rhyme, Anonymous

Single women are portrayed as hunters and schemers, or if they are older, as pathetic and manhungry. Married women are regarded as a burden, financially and emotionally, who drain their husbands' bank accounts for frivolous purposes. Working women are portrayed as part of the office furniture.

Sexists picture women as preoccupied with their physical appearance and clothes, constantly competing and gossiping with other women. Next to their physical appearance, their concerns do not extend past housework and child care.

Sexism is hard to fight. It's difficult in a social or business situation to disagree publicly with commonly held beliefs. Should a woman respond by getting angry she may be seen as a "shrew" or a "hysterical female". If she cries, she is "too emotional". If she discusses it calmly and logically, she seems "unfeminine" or "thinking like a man". Most often, though, she is simply laughed at for being a "women's libber".





*"Classifications that treat persons differently simply because they were born into a class (i.e. race, religion, national origin, sex) are antithetical to democracy because the individual is permanently condemned to legal restrictions by virtue of a status over which he or she has no control."*

Mary Eastwood  
*The Double Standard of Justice*

Although blatant hostility is difficult to deal with, it's often just as hard to deal with friendly comments that support some of women's demands while expressing other, equally restrictive stereotypes. For example, "I'm all for my wife having a career, but who is going to look after the kids when they're sick?"

Our society's everyday language and the mental stereotypes that go with them are more important than they may appear. Sexist attitudes are put into practice every day in hundreds of ways – in discriminatory hiring patterns, in unfair credit policies, unequal wages, demeaning advertising and restricted educational opportunities. Whether openly expressed or unconsciously practised, sexism closes the door on the legitimate hopes and valuable talents of half the population.

## SUGGESTED DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. List as many clichés about women as you can. Substitute a racial or religious group for "women" in these clichés. Does this make the statement less or more offensive? Substitute "men" for "women" in these statements. Do you frequently hear these kinds of clichés about men?
2. Research and discuss the protection given to racial and religious minorities in your province under human rights legislation. Does similar protection exist for women? How could human rights legislation be changed to protect women?
3. Act out the following scene: At a social gathering a male guest says he is "all for women's lib, but women are really too emotional for executive jobs". How would this remark be received by other guests? How might you respond to it?
4. Using television programming and advertising as your guide, discuss sexism in the media. How might women combat advertisers or broadcasters who portray women in a demeaning way? Is there any legal protection against insulting advertising and broadcasting for minority groups in your province? How might the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) respond to demeaning images of women in the media?
5. Many women feel that Canadian rape laws are an indicator of attitudes toward women in the general public. What image of women is presented by these laws? Do proposed amendments to the law change this image? How does rape legislation compare with legislation governing other violent offenses?





In any area of social change, there comes a time when discussion and reading are no longer satisfying or helpful. The need to participate in making changes to improve the status of women is reflected in the growing numbers of women and men who are involved in groups specifically organized around women's issues. Other groups with a wider focus than women's issues have also integrated some of the concerns of women into their programmes for action.

The way you get involved will depend on your community, your area of interest and your personal approach to the problems of women.

In most communities across the country, women's groups have formed to promote change in the status of women. Women's centres, for example, offer a variety of activities from educational programmes to the provision of legal and other services for women. The YWCA or community college may organize special programmes for women. These gatherings may be general discussion groups or may focus on specific needs, such as re-entering the work force or coping with widowhood. Men may find discussion groups and male consciousness-raising groups at community centres or universities.

Status of women committees have formed at the municipal and/or provincial levels to look at a variety of problems facing women. They generally work through political and legal channels to eliminate legislative, economic and educational barriers faced by women. Such groups focus on problems that affect large numbers of women in the community.

Many voluntary organizations offer other avenues of involvement of women and men. Several groups have formed around specific issues of concern to women. Daycare coalitions, family planning groups, political women's groups and groups concerned about sexist advertising are some examples of these single-issue organizations. Many professional organizations such as lawyers' or doctors' groups have special subcommittees

## going beyond discussion



to deal with status of women issues. Other community organizations are being sensitized by concerned members.

If you don't wish to become a group member, there are still many ways of participating in status of women work. Watch for sexist advertising and boycott the product after telling the manufacturer why you aren't buying. Write letters to the editor over issues of concern to women. Encourage your school board to buy nonsexist texts and to provide equal opportunities for women students. Speak out at all-candidates meetings for city council when candidates ignore women's needs. Consider the roles played in your own family or business and see if they can be improved to better the status of women.

Women's concerns touch every part of our daily lives. For each concern there are many different points of view and solutions. Philosophical approaches to the problems of women may be radical, moderate or conservative, and there are groups that reflect each point of view. The "women's movement" is made up of all kinds of groups and individuals who share a common concern to improve the status of women. Within this spectrum there is a place for each of us to feel comfortable and to improve the status of women.







## suggested reading & audio visual material



### BOOKS

*Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*  
by Susan Brownmiller  
Simon & Schuster, New York, 1975

*The Five Duellists*  
by Margaret Laurence  
McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1969

*A Harvest Yet To Reap: A History of Prairie Women*  
by Linda and Lorna Rasmussen et al.  
The Women's Press, Toronto, 1976

*Her Own Woman: Profiles of Ten Canadian Women*  
by Myrna Kostash et al.  
MacMillan, Toronto, 1976

*The Lace Ghetto*  
by M. Nunes and D. White  
New Press, Toronto, 1972

*The Law Is Not for Women*  
by J. Callwood and M. Zuker  
Pitman, Toronto, 1971

*Lives of Girls and Women*  
by Alice Munro  
McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Toronto, 1971

*Male Chauvinism: How it Works*  
by Michael Korda  
Random House of Canada, Mississauga, Ontario, 1973

*Never Done: Three Centuries of Women's Work in Canada*  
by the Corrective Collective  
Canadian Women's Educational Press, Toronto, 1974

*Olympic Gold: Canadian Winners of the Summer Games*  
by F. Cosentino and G. Leysdon  
Holt Rinehart and Winston, Toronto, 1975



*Penelope's Web: Some Perceptions of Women in European and Canadian Societies*  
by Naomi Griffiths  
Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1976

*People of the Buffalo: How the Prairie Indians Lived*  
by Maria Campbell  
J.J. Douglas Publishing

*The Psychology of Sex Differences*  
Eleanor Maccoby and Carol Jacklin  
Stanford Press, Stanford, 1966

*Sport and American Society*  
by G. Sage  
Addison-Wesley Publishing

*To See Ourselves: five views of Canadian women*  
by Sheila Arnopoulos et al  
Government of Canada, 1975

*Vancouver Women's Health Booklet*  
Canadian Women's Educational Press, Toronto





*Women on the March/L'Essor Feminin, 1958*

A two-part look at the history and current status of women in Canada. Part 1 is a good documentary look at the past. Part 11 may be too dated to be useful.

*Working Mothers, 1974*

The first of a continuing series of films designed to promote discussion about the issues faced by women. Check with your NFB office for additional films in the series.

- Extensions of the Family
- It's Not Enough
- Like the Trees
- Luckily I Need Little Sleep
- Mothers Are People Too
- They Appreciate You More
- Tiger on a Tight Leash
- Would I Ever Like To Work

The following films are not available through NFB outlets. There may be some charge for their use.

*Don't Call Me Baby, 1975*

A look at the situation of women represented by one of Canada's largest unions.  
For information regarding rental or purchase contact:  
The Canadian Union of Public Employees  
233 Gilmour Street  
Ottawa, Ontario

*Learning to Read Between the Stereotypes, 1974*

Available for teachers from the  
Teaching Aids Department  
Toronto Board of Education  
333 Adelaide Street West  
Toronto, Ontario

*Women's Work, 1976*

A woman's work is undervalued. This film investigates the widening gap between men and women mostly in terms of wages.

For information regarding rental or purchase contact:  
E & A Productions

396 Davisville Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4S 1A5

*Strategy for Change, 1972*

Film of the First National Status of Women Conference. Discussions include Women in Politics, Women's Rights and Education.

Canadian Film Distribution Centre  
406 Jarvis Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4Y 2G6

*Anything You Want To Be, 1972*

A young girl describes her own desires and plans for the future while the accompanying visuals tell a different story.

Marlin Motion Pictures  
47 Lakeshore Road East  
Port Credit, Ontario  
L5G 1C9

*After the Vote, 1969*

This feminist documentary covers a lot of informative ground and is enlivened by a sense of humour as well as a focus on Canadian facts and statistics.

Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre  
406 Jarvis Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4Y 2G6



*The Sexist Ad Kit*

produced by:  
Vancouver Status of Women  
2029 West 4th Avenue  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
Sexist ads and how to fight them.

*Sex-Stereotyping in Children's Books, the Media, and Elementary Education*

produced by:  
Women's Bureau  
Ontario Ministry of Labour  
400 University Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
A comprehensive bibliography.

*What's Been Done*

produced by:  
The Advisory Council on the Status of Women – reference above  
The status of recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, first published in 1974.

*Women in the Labour Force: Facts and Figures, 1975*

produced by:  
Women's Bureau  
Labour Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0J2

Statistics on the number of women in the Canadian labour force, where they are and what they are doing.  
Available in libraries.

*Working with Film*

Access  
Number 14, Spring 1975  
produced by:

National Film Board – see reference above  
A discussion of using film, particularly the Working Mothers series, with women.

FILMS

The following films produced by the National Film Board are all 16mm. and available from NFB outlets throughout the country without charge.

*A Token Gesture, 1976*

This 8-minute animated film provides a light-hearted introduction to the problems of women in today's society.

*A Woman's Place, 1972*

Almost all aspects of the status of women in Canada are touched on by women speaking in this film.

*Everybody's Prejudiced, 1961*

Examples of prejudice that everyone will recognize and be able to discuss. Not specifically about sex discrimination.

*Great Grand Mothers, 1976*

A look at prairie women and their work for women's suffrage.

*La Québécoise, 1972*

The evolving role of women in Québec society and interviews with several Québec women.

*Laurette, 1969*

A portrayal of the circumstances many young women face when they find themselves left to cope with family problems alone.

*Mother-To-Be/De Mère en Fille, 1967*

Can a woman achieve her fullest self-realization while at the same time giving herself to the role of wife and mother?

*The Game, 1966*

About the sexual behavior of teenagers showing the game of sexual exploitation for the purpose of achieving peer approval and masculinity on the boy's part.

*The Merry-Go-Round, 1966*

A somewhat dated look at the double standard in dating for adolescents.

*This Is No Time for Romance, 1966*

A woman speculates on her life and her marriage. What might she have made of herself without marriage?

*Three Women Series, 1964*

Portrays the change in the life of women in French Canada. A view of women in their occupations:

*Caroline*

To the public she is pleasant, the never-ruffled handler of everyone's complaints at the telephone company. The film reveals her doubts about her personal life, the domestic world of husband and child.

*Fabienne*

She is a successful nightclub dancer. This is the portrait of a woman who has achieved enviable fame, yet is far from content.

*Françoise*

In her work as an advertising artist, she finds unwanted success. Her competence has resulted in hostile feelings in her fellow employees. Work is one escape from an unsatisfying domestic situation, yet it is still unfulfilling.



*Wilderness Women: Canada's Forgotten History*

by Jean Johnston  
Peter Martin Books, Toronto, 1973

*A Woman in a Man's World*

by Thérèse Casgrain  
McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1972

*The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada*

by Catherine Cleverdon  
University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1974

*Women and Madness*

by Phyllis Chesler  
Doubleday, New York, 1972

*Women at Work: Ontario 1850-1930*

Canadian Women's Educational Press, Toronto, 1974

*Women in Canada*

by Marylee Stephenson  
New Press, Toronto, 1973

*Women in the Canadian Mosaic*

ed. Gwen Matheson  
Peter Martin, Toronto, 1976

*The Young Women's Guide to Liberation:  
Life While the Choice Is Still Yours*

by Karen deCrow  
Pegasus Books, New York, 1971

## PAMPHLETS AND BOOKLETS

*Alternatives to Marriage and the Nuclear Family*

produced by:

Burnaby Public Library  
7252 Kingsway  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
V5E 1G3

A bibliography.

*Canadian Women Film Makers*

produced by:

Canadian Film Institute  
1762 Carling Avenue  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2A 2H7

An interim filmography, available in some university libraries.

*A Directory of Canadian Women's Groups, 1976*

produced by:

Women's Programme  
Department of the Secretary of State  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0M5

An annotated guide to women's organizations across Canada, available in most libraries and women's centres.

*Equality for Women?*

produced by:

New Brunswick Human Rights Commission  
P.O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, New Brunswick  
E3B 5H1

Understanding the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.



*Federal Services for Women*

produced by and available from:

The Office of the Co-ordinator  
Status of Women  
63 Sparks Street  
Ottawa, Ontario

A guide to federal programmes, services and grants of interest to women.

*The Person Papers*

produced by and available from:

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women  
Box 1541, Station B  
Ottawa, Ontario

Booklets dealing with issues crucial to women:

- Matrimonial Property
- Regarding Rape
- Fringe Benefits
- Birth Planning
- Health Hazards at Work
- The Price of Maternity
- Taxes Unstrangled

*Projecting Women*

produced by and available from:

National Film Board  
P.O. Box 6100, Station A  
Montréal, Québec  
H3C 3H5

A 60-page catalogue of National Film Board films of interest to women.

*Report on the National Conference on Women & Sport, 1974*

produced by and available from:

Health and Welfare Canada  
Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch  
365 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0X6





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**Women's Program**



**Secretary  
of State**

**Secrétariat  
d'Etat**

DESIGN / Peggy Steele

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